

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 remain in this application. Claims 1, 3, 4 and 8 have been amended, while claim 2 and claims 5-7 remain unchanged. Claim 9 is new. No new subject matter is believed to have been added by this Amendment.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner indicates that Figs. 13 and 14 should be designated by a legend such as -- prior art --. This designation has been added to Figs. 13 and 14.

On page 2 of the Office Action, the Examiner objects to the disclosure, indicating that there are two brief descriptions of Fig. 13 and no brief description of Fig. 14. The specification has been changed to indicate that the second description of Fig. 13 should actually be for Fig. 14.

On page 3 of the Office Action the Examiner rejects claims 1, 2, 4 and 5 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by the teaching of United States Patent No. 5,865,378 to Hollinshead et al. The Hollinshead patent is directed to a flexible shower arm assembly with segments having three degrees of rotational freedom. However, a significant feature not found in the Hollinshead patent is that one of the first pipe member or the second pipe member is slideably mounted within the joint to permit relative motion in the pipe axis direction between the pipe members. Additionally, the first pipe member and the second pipe member are supported within the joint to be moveable relative to each other along a pipe axis direction and the pipe members are joined together along an entire telescopic range of the two pipe members.

These features are neither taught nor suggested by the Hollinshead patent and for that reason, the Applicants believe that claim 1 as amended is patentably distinct over the teaching of the Hollinshead patent and the other prior art of record. By way of their dependence

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In Reply to USPTO Correspondence of June 3, 2004
Paper Dated October 4, 2004
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AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to Fig. 13 and Fig. 14. This sheet, which includes only Figs. 13 and 14, replaces the original sheet including Figs. 13 and 14. Changes incorporated in this sheet are highlighted on the attached annotated sheet.

Attachments: Replacement sheet
Annotated sheet showing changes

upon what is believed to be patentably distinct independent claim 1, dependent claims 2, 4, and 5 are themselves believed to be patentably distinct.

Also on page 3 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 1 and 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by the teaching of United States Patent No. 4,026,119 to Dotti. The Dotti patent is directed to a device for conveying a fluid between a subsea duct and a buoy, which, as Fig. 5 of the Dotti patent illustrates, includes a coupling capable of rotation and includes a sleeve (Item 52) having a virtually extending surface. However, just as with the Hollinshead patent, the Dotti patent neither teaches nor suggests a joint which permits movement in the pipe axis direction between adjacent pipe members. Therefore, once again, claim 1 as amended is believed to be patentably distinct over the teaching of the Dotti patent and the other prior art of record. By way of its dependence upon what is believed to be patentably distinct claim 1, claim 2 is itself believed to be patentably distinct over the prior art of record.

On pages 4-7 of the Office Action, the Examiner rejects claims 3, 6, and 7 as being obvious from the teaching of the Dotti patent either alone or in view of the teaching of various other references. Additionally, claim 6 is rejected as being obvious from the teaching of the Hollinshead patent in view of the teaching of United States Patent No. 6,648,376 to Christianson et al. By way of their dependence upon independent claim 1, dependent claims 3, 6, and 7 are themselves believed to be patentably distinct.

The Examiner, on page 7 of the Office Action, objects to claim 8 as being based upon a rejected base claim but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. New claim 9 has been added which is comprised of the text of claim 8 including all of the limitations of claim 8 with any intervening claims.

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Reconsideration of claims 1-8 and allowance of claims 1-9 are respectfully
requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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Fig. 13

PRIOR ART

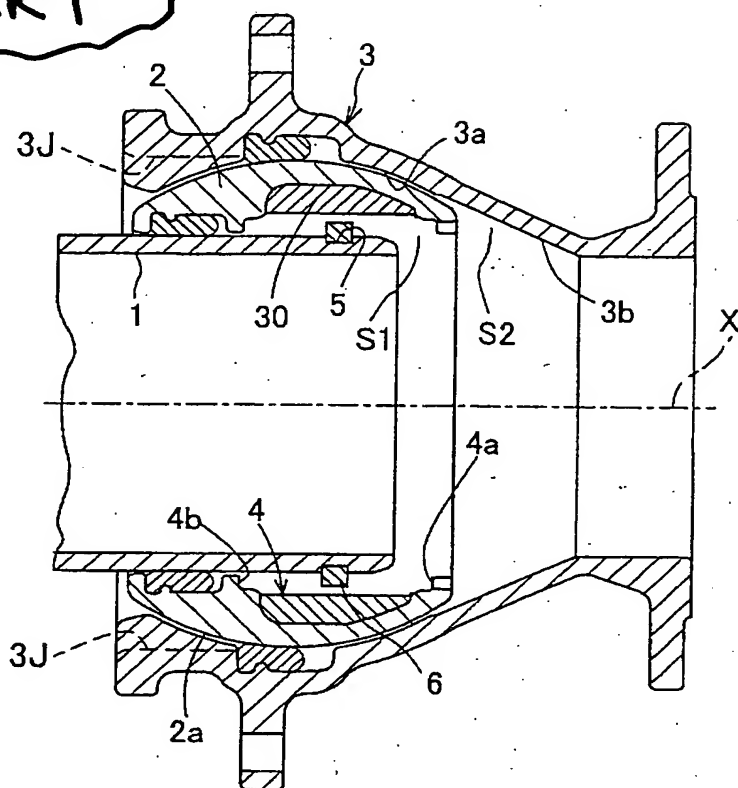


Fig. 14

PRIOR ART

